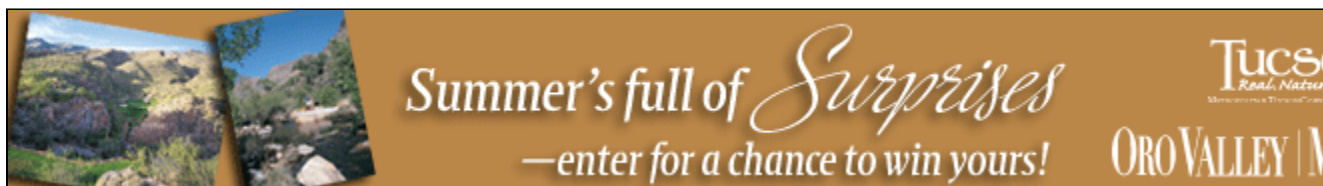


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1-cent tax for transit needs may go on ballot

By Andrea Kelly

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

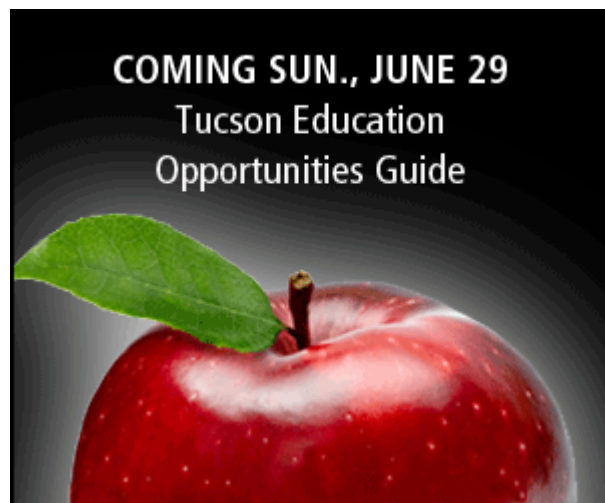
Tucson, Arizona | Published: 06.03.2008

Two meetings in Southern Arizona will help state officials shape a transportation plan for the November ballot.

Though the initiative backers are still gathering signatures to put the issue on the ballot, the Arizona Department of Transportation is working ahead.

The department must have public hearings on the transportation program and has scheduled four this month. Two are in Southern Arizona.

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A Phoenix-based group called the Transportation and Infrastructure Moving Arizona's Economy, or TIME Coalition, is backing the 1-cent, 30-year statewide transportation plan.

It includes statewide and local transportation elements. It would come on top of Pima County's Regional Transportation sales tax, a half-cent voters approved in 2006.

The state sales tax is 5.6 percent, the city of Tucson sales tax is 2 percent, and the Pima County Regional Transportation tax is 0.5 percent.

If voters approve the statewide

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transportation initiative's additional 1-cent sales tax, the tax in Tucson would be 9.1 percent.

The plan roughly allocates about 58 percent of the anticipated \$43 billion funding for use on state highways, about 18 percent of the funding for rail and transit, 24 percent to transportation needs for local cities and towns, said Victor Mendez, state transportation director.

Two Southern Arizona meetings are scheduled this month.

- June 9, from 5 to 7 p.m. in the town of Marana's council chambers, 11555 W. Civic Center Drive, Marana.

- June 19, from 9 to 11 a.m. at the Manning House, 450 W. Paseo Redondo, Tucson.

The State Transportation Board will preside at these meetings, and public comments will be taken into the record.

The TIME Coalition must turn in signatures from at least 155,000 registered Arizona voters by July 3 for the initiative to make it on the November ballot.

If voters approve it, the 1-cent sales tax would begin in 2010, Mendez said.

- *Contact reporter Andrea Kelly at 573-4243 or akelly@azstarnet.com.*



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